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# Judge Accepts Guilty Plea by High-Tech Spy

By MARK A. STEIN, *Times Staff Writer*

SAN FRANCISCO—A federal judge on Monday accepted the guilty plea of Silicon Valley spy James D. Harper Jr. to one count of conspiracy to commit espionage in a hearing in which federal prosecutors revealed many of the cloak-and-dagger details of Harper's relationship with Soviet Bloc agents.

U.S. District Judge Samuel Conti set a May 14 sentencing date for Harper, whose sale of sensitive anti-missile defense secrets to Polish agents was said to be "extremely valuable" to Soviet military experts who might be contemplating a nuclear surprise attack or evaluating U.S. intelligence-gathering capabilities.

Prosecutors have asked that Harper receive the maximum penalty—life in prison—for the sales, which apparently netted him \$250,000. Earlier in the case, Conti had ruled that Harper, if convicted, would be eligible for the death penalty. But that ruling was struck down by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, opening the way for Monday's plea.

The evidence presented to support Harper's plea included a repeat of charges that San Jose businessman William B. Hugle was an active co-conspirator in the operation, setting up meetings and sharing in payoffs.

Monday's all-day session also introduced two new figures—Hugle's wife, Bevelyn, and a man identified only as John Stouffer. Assistant U.S. Atty. William Farmer and others involved in the case would give no details about Stouffer nor elaborate on how he and Bevelyn Hugle may have been

involved. However, Farmer did say the investigation is continuing.

William Hugle, last reported to be in Paris, has maintained his innocence from the time he was publicly named in an FBI affidavit released at the time of Harper's arrest last October. Hugle has not been formally charged in the case, nor have his wife or Stouffer.

Monday's testimony also disclosed that Harper tried to sell "data-base tapes" purportedly containing confidential semiconductor technology of one or more private firms in the Silicon Valley computer-research area south of here.

However, Harper was charged only with selling military secrets that were supplied to him by his wife, Ruby Louise Schuler. Before her death in June, 1983, Schuler was executive secretary to the president of Systems Control Inc., a Palo Alto research firm under contract to the Army's Ballistic Missile Defense Advanced Technology Center in Alabama.

Documents released at the hearing showed that the papers Harper sold detailed the ability of the United States to estimate the nuclear-missile capabilities of the Soviet Union and to detect and destroy incoming nuclear missiles. An Army engineer testified, however, that the United States has not yet built such a system.

The engineer, John H. Cunningham, said the papers nonetheless show the state of American technology in the field and the accuracy of U.S. intelligence. By studying



Associated Press

James D. Harper Jr.

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